

MARAD's SS Cape Gibson High Performer in Major Maritime Exercise

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Have you ever wondered how military ships receive replenishment supplies such as beans, bullets or ice cream while at sea instead of returning to shore for resupplies? Those items may very well have been delivered to a ship at sea by the SS *Cape Gibson*.

Although the *Cape Gibson's* primary mission is to shuttle ammunition, it is also equipped to carry dry stores and freeze and chill items for delivery to military ships.

The *Cape Gibson*, a converted breakbulk cargo ship belonging to MARAD's Ready Reserve Force

From June 26 through July 28, 2006, the *Cape Gibson* participated in a major maritime exercise conducted in the waters off Hawaii.

Military forces from seven Pacific Rim nations, Australia, Canada, Chile, Peru, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the United States, along with the United Kingdom participated in Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2006.

This year's multinational exercise was the twentieth in a series of RIMPAC exercises conducted periodically since 1971. Over 40 ships, six submarines, 160 aircraft and almost 19,000 sailors, airmen, Marines, soldiers and Coast Guardsmen participated in the training operations.

RIMPAC is intended to enhance the tactical proficiency of participating units in a wide array of combined operations at sea. By enhancing interoperability, RIMPAC 2006 helped to promote stability in the Pacific Rim region to the benefit of all participating nations. This year's exercise included a variety of surface combatant ships, submarines, tactical aircraft and amphibious

forces. The United States Third Fleet, commanded by Vice Adm. Barry Costello, was responsible for overall exercise coordination. Individual units remained under operational command of their respective



national commanders throughout the exercise.

The *Cape Gibson*, like other RRF ships, is crewed by civilian merchant mariners and augmented by a U.S. Naval Reserve Cargo Afloat Rig Team (CART), which performs the underway replenishment. During RIMPAC 2006, the ship performed a multitude of operations that supplied dry goods, munitions and refrigerated goods to the U.S. Navy's fleet, as well as naval vessels of other nations participating in the biennial exercise.

"The ship performed exceptionally well," said *Cape Gibson's* Master John Larsen, "and, once again, has proven the CART team to be a viable as well as a very economical merging of U.S. Navy talent and merchant marine ability."

When needed, the *Cape Gibson*, as part of MARAD's RRF, is called to activation by the U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command. The ship can be activated within a short four-day period, and achieve full operational status under operational command of the Military Sealift Command.

For more information on RIMPAC 2006, go to http://www.comthirdflt.navy.mil/RIMPAC_2006/index.htm



Underway replenishment of supplies to a U.S. Navy vessel by the Cargo Afloat Rig Team aboard the SS *Cape Gibson* during RIMPAC 2006.

(RRF), was modified to have underway replenishment capability. As such, it serves as a shuttle ship during contingency or war in support of U.S. Navy ships.